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ABSTRACT

Using data obtained from recent cross-national and longitudinal studies, the link between family influences and the traditional patterns of school achievement were assessed in terms of rural educational mobility and sex differentials within the context of the "sponsored" system of Norway's schools and the "contest" system characterized by U.S. schools. Information was gathered via self-administered questionnaires from: all graduating seniors in Ontonagon County, Michigan (1957/58, 1968, and 1974); 21 high schools serving 4 selected areas of Kentucky and West Virginia (seniors in 1968, 1969, and 1970); and the terminal classes of 15 ungdomsskole serving 3 selected areas in Norway (1968, 1969, and 1970). Major variables examined were: socioeconomic status; plan for further education; scholastic performance; and normative parental support. Results indicated: that among the Norwegian and the Kentucky/West Virginia study populations, both socioeconomic status and general parental interest exerted a marked influence upon educational success, with sex differences in educational plans being most disparate at the lower socioeconomic levels and among those perceiving strongest parental support; in Ontonagon County, the traditional sex differences and patterns of influence observed in 1957/58 had radically altered by 1968, with females demonstrating higher aspirations than males but enjoying less opportunities. (JC)

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CHANGING CAREER ORIENTATIONS OF RURAL GIRLS: SOME OBSERVATIONS FROM COMPARATIVE AND LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

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Rural Youth: Human Resource or Human Burden

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CHANGING CAREER ORIENTATIONS OF RURAL GIRLS: SOME OBSERVATIONS FROM COMPARATIVE AND LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Modern, complex society necessarily demands an intricately balanced division of labor and an increasing emphasis upon the specialization of work tasks. Along with this drive toward greater specialization and the resultant broader differentiation of social and economic roles, the importance of higher education and other institutionalized forms of advanced and/or focused training, is reinforced and in many respects, becomes even more difficult to satisfy. In short, as a nation develops, the need for highly skilled human resources expands accordingly, and a work force stratified by degrees of training is created, ranging from relatively unskilled occupations to professions exacting ten or more years of training beyond the secondary school level. Furthermore, common sense suggests and countless researchers have established that increasingly in modern societies, an individual's educational attainments affect the patterning of his or her career and, subsequently, that individual's abilities to build a satisfying and rewarding life style.

Historically, the attainment of higher education and the pursuit of professional careers has been monopolized, in large measure, by men -- at least until recent decades when many of the traditional barriers began to lift, thereby broadening somewhat the occupational opportunities available to women.[1/] Descriptions of woman's position even in the industrial countries of the West have continually centered on the "housewife-mother" role; and even among those proportionately few women who managed to attain college educations there is evidence that their professional career options were often rather sharply curtailed by the kinds of female professional role models with which they could readily identify. Recent findings show, for example, that a strong tendency continues for girls, especially those from rural areas, to choose primary or secondary school teaching as a career line over and above that of other kinds of professional alternatives.[2/]

As part of the career development process, youngsters are not only encouraged to achieve but also are taught to recognize the manifestations of achievement. This means, of course, that learning is oriented toward norms and values that are compatible with the system and that, as a result of on individual's adherence to them, promise him/her a comfortable and relatively secure ascent through the various hierarchical structures of the system. Consistency with ancipated future role-activities is positively sanctioned. This is to be expected, for socialization to the norms and values that direct and/or reinforce achieving behavior occurs principally in the home, the local peer group, and in the community school.

But in serving as an agency of socialization, the school also functions as a sorting-out mechanism instrumental in building a youngster's "realistic" appraisal of self, setting the pattern of individual achievement motivation vis-a-vis inherent abilities, providing a setting for the distribution of opportunities (both facilities and rewards), and thereby playing a key part in the allocation of personnel to fill the various occupational roles in society. This sorting-out process, which gains enormous significance and power in the light of the school's function as the principle societal agency for formal education (i.e., socialization in a more focused, specified manner than by the family), is legitimated within the framework of the American equalitarian ideology by the school's adherence to the code of "universalism."

The explicit criteria built into the American school system and by which youngsters are hierarchically ordered for the receipt of institutionalized rewards (entrance into college), are fundamentally meritocratic. In principle, students demonstrating the highest level of performance in high school, reflected in grades and success on a sundry of standardized examinations, are encouraged and awarded incentives to pursue further training at the college level. As suggested above, boys, upon graduation from college are far more likely than girls of the same cohort to continue their formal education and join the rank of professionals. Thus we might assume, all else equal, that the scholastic performance of boys would be much superior to that of girls and thereby account for their

disproportionately high rate of college attendance. But indeed, all else is not equal, for it has often been shown that girls, not boys, tend to be higher scholastic achievers,[3/] especially at the primary school level (when it really matters), but also up through to the last year of high school (Boocock 1972: 86).

Certainly the antithetical nature of these findings must evoke some skepticism about the efficiency of our educational system over and above its more obvious inequalities. In theory, a highly "efficient" educational system will train and distribute members of society so as to maximize their interests and capabilities, thereby enabling the system to function at its "optimum level." In no advanced society, however, has the full maximization of interests and talents been achieved; i.e., the opportunities for specialized training are not always open to the most "capable" individuals, and those persons most highly trained for a specialized occupation are not always the ones who fill that role in society. Our present concern involves, specifically, the wastage of valuable human resources 1) through the inferior academic performance of high school boys, and 2) through the somewhat lower levels of advanced educational ambition of high school girls.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the extent to which these patterns have come to be institutionalized and reinforced outside of the school setting, within the broader social order. That is, my inquiry probes at how deeply the normative constraints of society, which are internalized by young people vis-a-vis their general educational orientations, are rooted in the over all system of stratification and in the pattern of relationships they encounter in their extracurricular lives. More specifically I am interested in the influences of the family, its socioeconomic status, and the level of support generated toward the academic success of its members. It is quite possible that factors external to the school environment, such as the family, create structural "cross-winds" which operate in opposition to the universalistic standards that serve as the organizational principles of modern state-supported school systems.

Family influences, of course, are of paramount importance in present day speculation on the role of the school. A wide spectrum of research has demonstrated that various structural attributes of the family have a strong bearing on the educational aspirations

of youth, and in some instances supercede the impact of the educational system itself. One line of inquiry has led to a substantial accumulation of evidence suggesting that youngsters from families of higher socioeconomic status tend to have higher levels of educational ambition.[4/] Other researchers have subsequently attempted to sift out the specific dimensions of the normative configuration and dominant value patterns in the home which account for variation in the educational plans of high school students. Most notably these efforts have explored rather "education-specific" forms of family influences, such as "parental encouragement" or "stress" on their children's college plans.[5/]

Using data obtained from two recent projects, one cross-national and one longitudinal, an attempt is made in the following pages to assess, in an empirical fashion, the link between influences of the family and the traditional patterns of school achievement and college plans of high school aged boys and girls. From a comparative perspective, observations are made on sex differentials in educational mobility within the context of a "sponsored" education system, illustrated by the Norwegian case, and as contrasted with the "contest" system characteristic of the United States. Comments are then made, based on our longitudinal studies, in response to some of the questions raised in the comparative analyses and with respect to the patterns of change in the educational mobility of rural high school students in the United States during recent years.

Research Procedures

Ontonagon County, located on Lake Superior in the relatively remote, far northwestern corner of Michigan's upper peninsula, comprises the area from which our longitudinal data were drawn. It is the third largest county in Michigan, but also one of the most rural and sparsely populated in the state. Over the last few decades the economic base in Ontonagon County has shifted from agriculture to industry; today there are about 3500 persons employed in copper mining and, consistently, the pulp industry has prospered. Farming, and farm related occupations on the other hand, have suffered rapid decline during the period. Information was obtained on the residential mobility and career orientations of virtually all of the graduating high school seniors in the county for the years 1957/58, 1968 and 1974.[6/]

The comparative, cross-cultural data incorporated into this paper were derived from information collected in 1968, 1969 and in 1970 from graduating seniors in the 21 high schools serving four selected areas of Kentucky and West Virginia and from students in the terminal classes of 15 ungdomsskole (primary schools) serving three selected areas of Norway. (Research procedures are reported by Schwarzweller 1976; Schwarzweller and Lyson 1974, 1976.)

For both projects, information was collected by self-administered questionnaires shortly before graduation from high school or ungdomsskole, that is, just before a key decision-making point in the educational career track. Consequently, the expressed "choices" or stated aspirations reflect a more realistic appraisal of self-esteem and educational orientation than at any earlier point in time. The foci of attention in both projects are similar and, for present purposes, the data-collection procedures can be treated as comparable. (Figure 1 shows diagramatically the spatial and temporal locations and the number of cases in each of the study populations.)

Plan for further education beyond the intermediate level (secondary, comprehensive) is viewed as a major step or variable in the process of achieving upward social mobility. American high school seniors were asked about their plans to enter college after graduation. Norwegian students were asked how much education they expected to get; those intending to continue their education at the gymnas level are by and large oriented toward the higher educational track and, in many respects, are comparable to American students who plan on college.

Scholastic performance is measured by cumulative grade average attained in high school (4 years) or in ungdomsskole (3 years). Although this measure is not sufficiently sensitive to discern differences in academic performance between boys and girls at the earlier and later years in school, the importance of such changes over the years is down-played here in the interest of utilizing an indicant of scholastic rank attained over a wide range of courses and as a broad measure of the assessments of the students' academic success made by parents, peers and teachers, as well as their own personal evaluations. In

the American case, grade rankings were derived from official school records; on the other hand, grade averages were obtainable only in gross categories of thirds and quartiles. For present purposes, grade ranks have simply been dichotomized at the midpoint.

Socioeconomic status is measured in the Norwegian and in the Kentucky-West Virginia cases by a composite scale based upon father's level of education and family's level of living. The socioeconomic background of youngsters in the three graduating classes in Ontonagon County were classified according to the Duncan "Socioeconomic Index for Occupations."[7] For present purposes, scales from both projects were dichotomized into "higher" and "lower" SES groups.[8]

The normative parental support youngsters experience in the home is tapped by summated multi-item scales. The scale items employed in the comparative project aimed to capture the general feeling of parental responsiveness to the youngster's needs and problems, and the extent to which parents actually encouraged their children to pursue a college career; subsequently this battery of items has been labelled as a "perceived parental interest" scale (Schwarzweller and Lyson 1974). The items included in the Ontonagon County questionnaire, however, focus on the general positive/negative nature of the relationships between parents and children, and thereby tap a more diffuse form of parental support and encouragement; in short, the items are meant to reflect the level of "parent-child rapport" (Clay 1976).[9] In both cases and for both projects, it is presumed that the influences of the family described here are of a normative sort, involving a particular set of expectations to which youngsters tend to conform, and the transmittance of various norms and value patterns which they must learn in order to cope with and adapt to the sometimes ambiguous, sometimes oberbearing exigencies which surround them in their everyday lives. In that sense, the data generated by these scales are basically comparable.

FINDINGS

Comparative Perspectives: Norway and the United States

Traditional patterns of sex differences in educational mobility are clearly reflected in the scholastic performance levels and educational plans of rural Norwegian ungdomsskole

and rural American high school students. Table 1 shows that girls out-perform boys scholastically especially in the American context,[10/] while going on to further academic education appears to be a more general tendency among boys than among girls, especially in Norway.

Although my main concern here is with the degree to which these patterns are institutionalized (via the internalization of normative expectations reinforced by externally imposed normative constraints) within the socioeconomic structure of modern industrial societies, and how young people come to be socialized to the norms and values that guide their day-to-day social behavior, it must be recognized that the school system, by reflecting societal norms is also responsible for maintaining these sex differences. For example, Ponzo (1969) concludes that schools are by and large "feminine institutions" supporting traditional female roles; thus, girls succeed because they conform to these roles. He found that with movement toward a more traditional sex role identity, boys experienced less academic success, while the opposite was true for girls.

One possible manifestation of the school's reinforcing effect on sex-role norms is the particularly wide discrepancy in the scholastic performance records of girls and boys in American schools. The occupational structure in the United States has experienced rapid growth of its white-collar sector; furthermore, the system of higher education in this country has expanded in concomitant fashion. As a result, the rewards for achieving good grades have become more visible and less scarce. Indeed, nearly anyone with even some scholastic potential (and, in some cases, even with below average grades) is now in a position to move into the college track. Thus, it seems that the sorting-out function of education has been pushed upward into the college level and, as some recent Ph.D.'s have discovered, even beyond. In short, the "competition" motive may not be what it once was for boys and girls in American high schools. These changes in the rigidity of the schools' role in the selection process may be one factor accounting for the relatively weaker statistical association between grade rank and plans for further academic education among American youth in comparison with that among Norwegian ungdomsskole students (Schwarzweller 1975).

By taking the social class factor into account (Table 2) one begins to see how the traditional pattern of sex differences is linked with the normative configuration influencing youngsters in context of the home. In the American case, girls tend to outperform boys at both higher and lower socioeconomic status levels. But at the point of moving toward a college career the expected male bias emerges modestly yet exclusively at the lower SES level. This is probably an artifact of traditional sex-norms. Boys internalize education-related values in much the same way, regardless of their class status; they are taught to see education as an important step toward elite status and a higher paying job. In other words there is a relatively high degre of consensus as to the meaning and value of a college education. Middle class and working class families on the other hand are perhaps somewhat less in agreement as to what it means for a girl to go to college or to gymnas. The girl from a middle or upper class background is encouraged to pursue higher education as a part of her "finishing" and in order to find the "right" sort of husband. In the past this has not been a dominant value possessed by girls from working class families.[11/]

Similarly, sex differences in the plans for further education among Norwegian students is evidenced only for lower SES boys and girls. The educational plans of upper class girls are on a par with that of upper class boys, in part because of the social meaning of higher education for middle class girls discussed above, but also because there appears to be a great deal of family pressure on these girls to perform well in school. Their early educational success may exert a positive effect on the development of high mobility aspirations. Indeed, in an earlier report derived from these data, Schwarzweller and Lyson (1974), in their search for a link between grades and plans for further education, found that the strongest relationship of all occurred among Norwegian girls from higher class families.

Table 3 presents findings that suggest the more direct support and encouragement expressed by parents on the educational success of their children. In general, boys perceive stronger parental interest than girls vis-a-vis their educational plans and performance. This is quite understandable since it is crucial that young men in industrialized

nations such as Norway and the United States give careful consideration to the particular career lines they follow. For one's career choice at this early point in time goes a long way in determining the social and economic position he, and his conjugal family, occupies for some time hence. The decision to pursue further formal education by young women on the other hand, is of a considerably less vital nature; she has always been offered an alternative option to secure her livelihood and to establish a status position in the community, namely, through marriage and the homemaker role.

In recognition of the different career options open to their sons and daughters, it is abundantly clear why parents have tended to emphasize the educational success of their sons, and, in this regard, especially their sons' decisions to move up the educational ladder, for in the long run this is the more important and, pragmatically, the more expedient goal compared with the achievement of learning per se (as reflected in scholastic record). Viewed in this context it follows that the educational plans of boys and girls are most divergent among those who perceive strong interest and encouragement on the part of their parents. The educational ambition of boys who lack this parental support is severely eroded, in some instances to the level of girls.

The discussion to this point provides us with some understanding as to how and why the normative (class) influence, and the more direct educational support experienced in the family affects the school achievement and mobility aspirations of rural boys and girls in Norway and America. We are also aware that the more developed societies of the West, the United States for example, have undergone major social, economic and technological transformations over the years, some of which have resulted in a redifinition of role of women in society; of particular importance has been an awakening in the attitudes and expectations regarding women's rights and the possibilities for career development. Thus, it is of interest here to explore the degree to which the normative impact of the family, as shown in the above analyses, is framed within the broader socioeconomic structure of society, and how recent transformations, especially those of the turbulent 1960's, have modified the role of the family in shaping the educational ambition of rural youth.

Longitudinal Perspectives: The Ontonagon County Case

As described earlier, Ontonagon County is a relatively depressed and rather remote county in Michigan's rural upper peninsula. Since the first phase of the study in 1957/58, the county's economy has continued to shift away from agriculture toward industry, notably, copper mining and pulp related industries. Although one would be hard-put to argue that Ontonagon County adequately represents all, or even most, rural areas in the United States, it does exhibit many of the basic economic and community problems commonly associated with rural life in America.

The traditional pattern of sex differences in school performance is reflected clearly in grade standings of boys and girls from Ontonagon County at all three points in time. In 1957/58 as well as in 1968, two-thirds of the girls but only one-third of the boys were ranked in the upper-half of their graduating classes on the basis of cumulative scholastic performance (Table 4). Since 1968, however, some change appears to have taken place. In 1974, 42 percent of the boys compared with 58 percent of the girls were classified in the upper-half of their graduating classes. Nevertheless, although the gap has narrowed in recent years, the sex-differential pattern continues to persist; girls get better grades than do boys.

Turning now to the college plans of these young people, it is evident that some rather interesting changes also have come about here over the years. In 1957/58 the social pressures to get a college education and to pursue a professional career were somewhat stronger for boys than for girls. By 1968, however, the traditional pattern showed signs of change and the proportion of girls planning on college was almost on a par with boys. During this decade, from 1957 to 1968, the prospect of attending a college or university was greatly inflated for both sexes. Expansion of the higher education system (throughout America and particularly in Michigan) along with growing family incomes, permitted more youngsters than ever before to continue their schooling. The most recent cohort, graduates in 1974, has demonstrated a complete reversal in the levels of educational ambition characteristic of the male and female sex-roles of the past. While the relatively high proportion (50%) of girls planning on college in 1968 was sustained through 1974, the college

plans of the boys waned radically to less than a third during this period of time. Although it would be difficult to document the precise causes of this rather dramatic reversal in career orientations of these rural youngsters, one may surmise that it is securely linked into the predominately male-oriented occupational structure of Ontonagon County, the severe nationwide economic recession of 1974, the termination of military draft deferments for college students, and society's new and changing normative expectations as to the appropriate aspirations and career goals of American women.

How are these patterns affected by changing normative perspectives and experiences in the home? In 1957/58 girls achieved higher grades in school than boys, regardless of their social class backgrounds (Table 5). Boys on the other hand were more likely than girls to plan on college, even when taking the social class effect into account. By 1968 the influence of the class context in generating male-female differences in students' grades began to emerge. Then by 1974 a similar pattern was manifested in their educational plans. In short, girls came to out-perform boys scholastically and to develop relatively higher educational aspirations than boys, especially within the lower socioeconomic strata.

The occupational structure in Ontonagon County is geared toward traditional patterns of employment. The vast majority of jobs are open to the male half of the population only, and among these, most involve manual labor; mining, woods work and other pulp related industries are just a few examples. Traditional expectations for women have been to get married and to bring up a family, while husbands worked in the mine, in the woods, or on the farm. Among the 1957/58 cohort, these patterns were clearly manifested in youngsters' plans for further education, as a greater proportion of boys than girls planned to go on to college.

By 1968 the traditional career patterns for girls and boys after graduation had been shattered. Lower SES students were nearly as likely to seek a college education as higher SES students, and the numbers of girls with college intentions had surpassed that of boys. Economic prosperity throughout the 1960's enabled even the lower social levels to realize their educational aspirations, and the general acceptance of the "achievement oriented female" has encouraged increasing numbers of girls to go to college and pursue professional careers.

It is because the occupational structure in Ontonagon County has been unable to keep pace with the rapid developments in the structuring of career opportunities for women that vast educational differentials between men and women became evident in 1974. My hypothesis is that the substantial increase of females headed for college, relative to that of males, was largely because of the comparatively few jobs available for girls in this rural county; therefore, rural girls tend to view college as a "way out." By entering college a young girl is able to broaden her occupational horizons, acquire valuable skills and "escape" the structural barriers and normative constraints that affect the life styles of women within the social situation of this rural county.

Social class background in 1974, too, was an important determinant of the educational plans of girls and, especially, of boys. It is my conjecture that the economic recession which seemed well on the upswing in the spring of 1974, was felt more severely by lower SES families than by higher SES families in Ontonagon County. Tight family resources appear to have been of greater consequence for the lower class boys than for the lower class girls, where only 18% of the former and a comparatively overwhelming 42% of the latter saw higher education as a reasonable option for the future. Yet lower SES boys differ from lower class girls in that boys who are discouraged from staying in school because of the scarcity of funds in the family may easily slip into the existing occupational structure, picking up a job in the copper mine, in the pulp industry, or in one of several other manual positions. Girls, on the other hand, do not have the same employment options to fall back on; in order to find work they must leave the county; one established (institutionalized) way out is via a college education.

Table 6 reports the effect of parental rapport on the sex differentials in scholastic rank and in college plans over time. Among the boys little change seems to have occurred in the percentages ranking high in their school classes even while taking parental rapport into account. In all cases, roughly a third of the boys demonstrated high scholastic achievement. By 1974 some change had come about, as the proportion of boys in the upper scholastic ranks rose to over 40%. Conversely, the grade performance of the girls dropped

in 1974, and this decline occurred entirely among those lacking strong rapport with their parents. With regard to the college plans of these youngsters, controlling for the level of parental rapport leaves the original sex differences gasically undisturbed.

Rural Ontonagon Students One Year After Graduation

In order to assess the residential, marital and educational statuses of Ontonagon high school students one year after graduation, a follow-up survey was made in the late spring of 1975 of all 201 members of the 1974 graduating class. My primary interest here is the question of who actually went to college of those who had expressed high college aspirations at the time of graduation from high school.

The follow-up data show that while 78% of the boys who had expressed college plans did in fact go to college, only 62% of the girls realized their educational plans during the following year (Table 7). Among those who had not planned on further education, only a negligible proportion had rearranged their career goals in such a way as to go on to college.

That girls tend to have higher aspirations than they are able to implement, suggests several things about the nature of the college decision-making process for women. The possibility that a class bias exists in the meaning and importance of a college education, or perhaps in a differential awareness of the availability of family resources for college was taken into account. The social class factor is of a little empirical import, however, in explaining the "over-aspiration" of these girls.

Probing further into the structure of relationships within the home, it seems that the parental rapport factor plays an important part in isolating those girls who were the least successful in fulfilling their educational aspirations. Of the girls who lack the general support structure within the family, less than a half were able to actualize their earlier plans for college. Thus, it is sufficiently clear that a young girl's family milieu is an important element in the formulation of college plans, and in providing her with the appropriate means (economic and psychological) by which to carry these plans out.

To be sure, the educational aspiration levels of rural youths are highly contingent upon their success at earlier stages of the educational mobility process (reflected by grades attained in school). Nevertheless, one's personal assessment of his or her own academic capabilities is not always entirely obvious; in many instances of course it is -- among the academic elite (college-prep track) on the one hand, and among those pursuing a more vocationally oriented program (vocational track) on the other. A relatively broad range exists across the middle of these extremes, comprised of more or less "marginal" students whose achieved statuses are not so clearly defined.

It is my conjecture that girls, more often than boys, find themselves occupying this middle-range position; the vocational track is not generally an option open to girls and the norms which define the appropriate role of the female student do not clearly pave the way to college. Indeed, as Coleman (1961) points out, there are social pressures on high school girls to do well in school, but not "too" well so as to be labelled a "brain". These opposing forces have a sandwiching effect on their school performance, thus reinforcing their marginal status. To bring this discussion to full circle, I hypothesize that among students planning to attend college, those who make the least accurate assessments of their own position in terms of necessary academic qualifications for elite status are girls, in general, and students with relatively low grades, in particular. The third control variable in Table 7 is grade performance and the resultant percentage differences are as expected: the greater concurrance between educational plans and attainment is among boys and especially those achieving high grades in school.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The preceeding analyses provide some additional insight as to the form by which traditional, and now rapidly changing sex differences in scholastic achievement and educational ambition are woven into the home lives of rural youths from selected regions in Norway and the United States. Among youngsters in the Norwegian as well as in the Kentucky/West Virginia study populations both socioeconomic status and general parental interest exert a

marked influence on their educational success. Sex differences in plans for further education are most disparate at the lower SES level and among those who perceive the strongest support from their parents. These findings suggest that norms and values relating to education and achievement are in a large measure integral to the familial context and that the general value patterns by which and toward which youngsters are socialized in the home are quite different for boys and girls, especially when family class background and level of parental support are taken into account.

In considering these differences, of course, it is necessary to take into account the nature of the occupational structure in these rural regions and the omnipresent norms about marriage and conjugal role segregation of "bread winner" and "housewife". All of these situational and normative circumstances combine to define the viable alternatives for boys and girls regarding the pursuit of a professional career.

Thus the paradox follows. Pressures to go to college, to get ahead, and to become someone of importance have been traditionally directed toward boys rather than girls. Young men, of course, have always been obliged to make a living for themselves and, after marriage, for their wives and children; females, on the other hand, have traditionally been oriented toward the marriage-housewife option. Conversely, the male-oriented occupational structure characteristic of the rural sector, especially in rather remote rural areas such as Ontonagon County, discourages young women from seeking and/or finding local employment, even if it is only until such time as they enter into marriage. Consequently, girls, if ambitious, must look elsewhre for employment, migrating to a nearby town or city (Singh 1975) or going on to college.

Such is the case in Ontonagon County. The traditional sex differences and patterns of influence that we observed in 1957/58 had been radically altered by 1968, a time of general upheaval in many major institutional spheres in American society. Through the 1960's and continuing yet, the "career-woman" role has gained wider acceptance. Female labor force participation rates have also exhibited rapid growth, and the average age at marriage among American women has undergone a steady rise for more than a decade. (Blake 1974) All of these societal trends exacerbate the young girl's predicament in the rural

setting, viz., broadening perspectives and heightened job aspirations where most occupational career lines and esteemed job positions are closed to them. Thus, although girls in rural Ontonagon County's graduating classes express rather strong (modern) career aspirations, the local setting offers them very little in terms of ways and means to achieve those aspirations within the local context.

But many of these girls do go on to college in response to or in preparation for society's new expectation's; in fact, they are more likely to do so than boys, and the difference appears to be widening. On the national level, too, there is good reason to believe that girls are surpassing boys in college ambition.[12/] Perhaps a new trend is in the making. Perhaps girls will dominate future educated/professional elites. Surely we can expect that the proportion of women moving into the professional ranks will grow at a disproportionate rate for some years to come.

Yet provision for the family's welfare has traditionally been, and continues to be, a responsibility of the husband. If the normative constraints reinforcing this tradition do not loosen, then the movement of the new and highly educated cohorts of women into competition for scarce advanced positions may jeopardize the acquisition of these jobs for husbands (male breadwinners) and consequently the well-being of the families they are expected to support.

Moreover, one must consider further problems associated with the well established marital pattern in which men and women tend to marry those with levels of education more or less similar to their own. In a society where higher occupational statuses are filled exclusively by men, the benefits derived from these positions are disbursed over as many families as there are such positions. On the other hand, in a society where the higher echelons of the occupational structure are comprised equally of men and women who inevitably tend to marry one another, the distribution of professional-managerial workers will be concentrated in a relatively small percentage of the families. Class/caste boundaries may become sharper.

Although these consequences and other repercussions of what looks to be a new emerging pattern of educational mobility cannot be pursued further here, I am hopeful that the few comments which have been made will suffice to sound a word of caution as to the kinds of problems we must be prepared to deal with in the future if this pattern persists. And furthermore, in closing, let us be especially sensitive not to overlook in our quest for individual rights and freedoms, the long standing importance and function of the family unit in our society.

NOTES

1. United States census figures show that the percentage of male and female students enrolled in degree-credit programs in American colleges and universities has been converging over the past few decades.

   % Male and Female of all Students Enrolled in American Colleges and Universities in the Years 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1973.

	1950	1960	1970	1973
Male	66	64	59	56
Female	34	36	41	44
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

   Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States 1974. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Table No. 219, p. 133.

2. Schwarzweller and Lyson (1976) show that girls, especially those from lower class backgrounds, from rural areas in Norway, Germany and the U.S. are far more likely to go into teaching than into any other profession.

3. See for example: Coleman 1961, p. 252; Pierce 1961; Ponzo 1969; Peck 1971; Boocock 1972, Chapter 5.

4. Some examples at various points in time and over a range of populations are: Kahl 1953; Rosen 1956; Bordua 1960; Simpson 1968; Williams 1972; Kerckhoff 1974; and Shapira and Yuchtman 1975.

5. Various measures of education-specific parental influence are: parental stress (Bordua 1960), parental encouragement (Kahl 1953; McDill and Coleman 1965; Rehberg and Westby 1967; Sewell et al. 1968, 1969; Jacobsen 1971), parental aspirations (Pearlin 1967; Duncan et al. 1968; Kandel and Lesser 1969, 1972), and parental expectations (Williams 1972).

6. In order to expand the number of cases in the first cohort, the graduating seniors of the 1957 and the 1958 classes were combined. Only those seniors in 1958 who had been studied as juniors the year before were included. In other words, all students entering Ontonagon county school district during the year were not included in the study.

7. A parallel analysis was conducted employing a measure of father's education level; the results of this analysis show little variation from the results of the analysis presented in this paper using socioeconomic status (measured by the Duncan scale) as an indicant of a youngster's social class background. Among boys as well as girls, SES and father's education level prove to be very highly correlated.

8. Parallel analyses also show that in Ontonagon County as well as in Norway/Kentucky-West Virginia the influence of SES on youngster's educational plans and grades in school differs very little from the effect of father's manual-nonmanual occupational status.

9. The specific items are as follows: a) It is hard for me to feel pleasant at home. b) My parents try to understand my problems and worries. c) As far as my ideas are concerned my parents and I live in two different worlds. d) There is real love and affection for me at home. e) My parents criticize me too much. f) My friends have happier homes than I do. g) Too often my parents compare me unfavorably with other children. h) As I have known it, family life is happy. i) My parents expect too much of me.

   The possibility that these items reflect two or more dimensions was taken into consideration. A systematic analysis of the nine item intercorrelation matrix as well as a factor analysis (Singh 1975, p. 37), and a standard item analysis, suggests that the set of items, for the most part are derived from a similar universe of content and represent a unidimensional attribute space. Thus one item ("As far as my ideas are concerned my parents and I live in two different worlds") has been selected out and used in the present analyses, which at face validity seems most congruent with the support mechanism suggested here by the notion of "parent-child rapport."

10. One assumption of this paper is that sex differences in academic performance are normatively rather than genetically prescribed. This is an argument that must be circumvented here; let it suffice to say, however, that no conclusive evidence exists one way or another as to the innate intellectual superiority of girls or boys.

11. In essence I am suggesting that the "dominant value" theory is more appropriate in the boys' case; while higher and lower class girls are socialized to subculturally distinct value structures. For a more complete discussion of the subculture and dominant value theories in the structuring of ambition, see Van Zeyl (1974, Chapter 1).

12. A recent current population survey reported that the proportion of female high school seniors in the U.S. planning on college has now reached a level surpassing that of boys.

	% Planning College		
	1972	1973	1974
Boys	46.1	43.5	40.9
Girls	46.3	42.3	46.2

Source: College Plans of High School Seniors: October 1974. U.S. Bureau of Census. Current Population Reports Series P-20, No. 284 (September 1975): Table A.

TABLE 1. Percent ranking in upper half of school class, and percent planning further academic education: Norwegian and American rural study populations compared.

	% ranking in upper half of school class		% planning further education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
United States (N=)	39 (1123)	61 (1136)	42 (1161)*	39 (1152)*
Norway (N=)	51 (671)	56 (686)	35 (695)*	29 (701)*

*The N reported here represent the total number of cases in the study populations. Differences between these figures and those reported elsewhere reflect the number of cases for which specified information is missing.

TABLE 2. Percent ranking in upper half of school class, and percent planning further education, by socioeconomic status: Norwegian and American rural study populations compared.

	% ranking in upper half of school class		% planning further education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
United States				
Low SES (N=)	31 (585)	52 (602)	27 (604)	23 (610)
High SES (N=)	49 (521)	71 (517)	60 (538)	59 (525)
Norway				
Low SES (N=)	44 (352)	47 (398)	22 (352)	14 (396)
High SES (N=)	61 (294)	72 (266)	51 (301)	52 (269)

TABLE 3. Percent ranking in upper half of school class, and percent planning further education, by perceived parental interest (PPI): Norwegian and American rural study populations compared.

	% ranking in upper half of school class		% planning further education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
United States				
Low PPI	33	57	33	34
(N=)	(555)	(486)	(587)	(498)
High PPI	46	65	51	43
(N=)	(567)	(650)	(573)	(654)
Norway				
Low PPI	49	53	29	25
(N=)	(418)	(370)	(420)	(396)
High PPI	55	60	44	32
(N=)	(232)	(299)	(236)	(301)

TABLE 4. Percent ranking in upper half of school class, and percent planning further education: three cohorts of rural Michigan (Ontonagon County) high school seniors compared.

	% ranking in upper half of school class		% planning further education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1957/58	34	65	37	29
(N=)	(124)	(130)	(124)	(130)
1968	32	64	48	52
(N=)	(90)	(103)	(90)	(103)
1974	42	58	32	50
(N=)	(100)	(101)	(100)	(101)

TABLE 5. Percent ranking in upper half of school class, and percent planning further education, by socioeconomic status: three cohorts of rural Michigan (Ontonagon County) high school seniors compared.

	% ranking in upper half of school class		% planning further education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1957/58				
Low SES	32	63	32	24
High SES	38	71	48	42
1968				
Low SES	27	70	46	50
High SES	38	57	50	55
1974				
Low SES	35	60	18	42
High SES	49	57	45	60

TABLE 6. Percent ranking in upper half of school class, and percent planning further education, by parental rapport: three cohorts of rural Michigan (Ontonagon County) high school seniors compared.

	% ranking in upper half of school class		% planning further education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1957/58				
Low Rapport	32	56	35	28
High Rapport	35	68	38	30
1968				
Low Rapport	31	61	55	49
High Rapport	33	67	44	55
1974				
Low Rapport	43	46	25	44
High Rapport	41	69	38	55

TABLE 7. Percent of 1974 graduating seniors from Ontonagon County's high schools (rural Michigan) actually having attended college during period one year after graduation, by college aspiration at time of graduation, and controlling for socioeconomic status, parental rapport, and scholastic performance record.

	% actually having attended college during period one year after graduation			
	planned/aspired to attend college		did not plan/aspire to attend college	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Total Percent (N=)	78 (32)	62 (50)	3 (68)	4 (50)
By Socioeconomic Status				
Low SES (N=)	78 (9)	64 (22)	5 (40)	3 (30)
High SES (N=)	78 (23)	61 (28)	0 (28)	5 (20)
By Parental Rapport				
Low Rapport (N=)	82 (11)	45 (20)	0 (35)	8 (25)
High Rapport (N=)	76 (21)	73 (30)	6 (35)	0 (25)
By High School Performance Record				
Lower Half (N=)	40 (10)	33 (12)	0 (48)	3 (29)
Upper Half (N=)	96 (22)	71 (38)	10 (20)	5 (21)

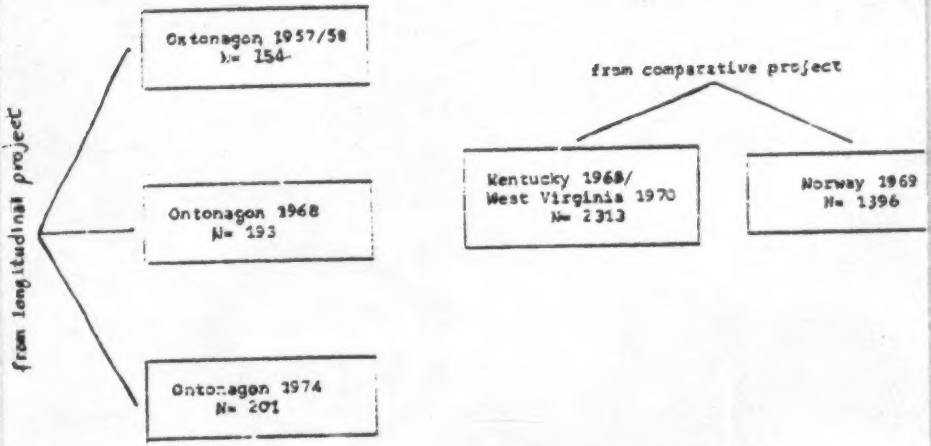

Figure 1. A description of the five study populations: location, time of study (in vertical sequence), and number of cases in each.

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